

NSC BRIEFING

6 DECEMBER 1956

DISORDERS IN NORTH VIETNAM

I. "Counterrevolutionary uprising" in N. Vietnam admitted by Viet Minh.

A. Occurred in mid-November in Catholic area near Vinh, (160 mi. south Hanoi), and suppressed only after troop reinforcements sent in.

B. "Uprising" was due to peasant discontent with land reform.

C. 25X1X6 confirmation Hanoi's guarded admissions, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Viet Minh leaders are "at their wits' end."

25X1X6 1. [REDACTED] discontent--mainly rural--very strong in urban Haiphong.

2. Common question is: "How can I get to South Vietnam?"

25X1X6 D. [REDACTED] Viet Minh regular army (267,000 troops) remains loyal to regime.

II. This Oct, Viet Minh leadership was reshuffled on grounds of "mistakes" in land reform.

A. Truong Chinh (longtime sec-gen) replaced by President Ho Chi Minh (who thus both chairman and sec-gen of Party).

B. Two other leading Communists dropped in Party rank and fired from Gov't jobs (vice-ministers of Agriculture and Interior).

C. Although North Vietnamese almost totally ignorant of recent Satellite unrest, Viet Minh leaders--strong supporters of Moscow line--are fully informed.

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- D. Leaders now declairing "important lessons" will be drawn from the "Hungarian situation" and regime will "pay adequate attention to people's living conditions."
- E. Although we believe Viet Minh regime--supported by a loyal army--is in no immediate jeopardy, we expect one immediate benefit: contrast between progress in South and discontent in North should handicap Viet Minh efforts both to undermine the Diem government and to effect Vietnamese unification on Communist terms.